



## ***Delaware Historical and Genealogical Recall: A guide to finding the original sources***

Matilda Spicer Hart’s newsletter contains references to numerous source documents. On this page we provide explanations and links to source documents. This information is current as of June 2024.

In the *Delaware Historical and Genealogical Recall (Recall)*, Mrs. Hart’s codes her sources as either **deeds (D)**, **wills (W)**, or **Orphans’ Court (OC)**. The original sources are available at the Delaware Public Archives. They also have been digitized, with some available on Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.com, and the University of Delaware.

### **Deeds**

In the *Recall*, deeds are coded as D - book letter - page. Delaware deed books of the period were identified by letter:

New Castle County: Book A, beginning in 1673, to Y-50 ending in 1951.	Kent County: Book A, beginning in 1680, to Z-18 ending in 1950.	Sussex County: Book A, beginning in 1769, to vol. 399 in 1951
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- **Ancestry.com:** The deed records are available in Ancestry as “Delaware, U.S., Land Records, 1677-1947”, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/61025/>.

Deeds are organized by County and Roll Number. Unfortunately, an index of Book to Roll Number has not been found. However, searching by name and deed date will usually find the correct deed. Searching by each of the names in an entry increases the likelihood of finding the correct source. Mrs. Hart’s recorded page numbers appear to be accurate, so this can be used to verify the source page is correct.

- **FamilySearch.com:** As of June 2024, FamilySearch has an experimental full text search of US Land and Probate Records, Mexico Notary Records, Australia Land and Probate Records, New Zealand Land and Probate Records, and US Plantation Records. This collection includes the Delaware deed books. <https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>.

For more information on Delaware deed and other land records, see the Delaware Genealogical Research Guide, pg. 111-113 or <https://delgensoc.org/research-guide/state-and-county-records/#land>.

### **Wills**

Wills are coded as W - book letter - page, which is where the full will is recorded in the Registrar’s Office.

**Ancestry.com** has two sources of Delaware will records:

- “Calendar of Delaware Wills, New Castle County, 1682-1800”, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/6282/>



The Delaware Society of Colonial Dames published this work in 1912, so it is likely that Mrs. Spicer had access to this source of information for New Castle County wills. As an extract, it documents the date the will was made and the probate date. It includes the names of all those mentioned in the will, with relationships.

- “Delaware, U.S., Wills and Probate Records”, <https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/9044/>

This collection includes images for probate records for all Delaware counties.

Search for the decedent rather than the marriage names. Search results may include the name in the index, which may include the book and page number of the source document.

For more information on Delaware probate and wills, see the Delaware Genealogical Research Guide, pg. 109-111, or <https://delgensoc.org/research-guide/state-and-county-records/#wills>.

## Orphans' Court

Orphans' Court records are coded as OC - book letter - page

As with the other source documents, searching by name is necessary. Although one may find a book number and page in the original documents, these are not indexed.

- **Delaware Public Archives Collections Gateway** contains Orphans' Court records, <https://archives.delaware.gov/collections-gateway/orphans-court-records/>. This is an index only. Searches can be done by the Parents or the Children. Copies of the original are available for a fee, or by visiting the Research Room in Dover.
- **FamilySearch.com** has records for Kent County only. The full document is available online. “Delaware Orphan Court records: COLLECTION RECORD, 1680-1978”, <https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/2094183>.
- **University of Delaware** has partial extracts of Orphans' Court records for all three counties. “Delaware Orphan's Court Extracts (1770-1830)”, <https://udspace.udel.edu/handle/19716/1346>.

These extracts are those containing property valuations of individuals owning real property who died survived by minor children. The valuation of the property was meant to provide for maintenance of the orphans until they reach majority. The extracts are available by county in .txt, .doc and .pdf format. The listings are alphabetical by last name.

For more information on Delaware Orphans' Court records, see the Delaware Genealogical Research Guide, pg. 108-109, or <https://delgensoc.org/research-guide/state-and-county-records/#court>.